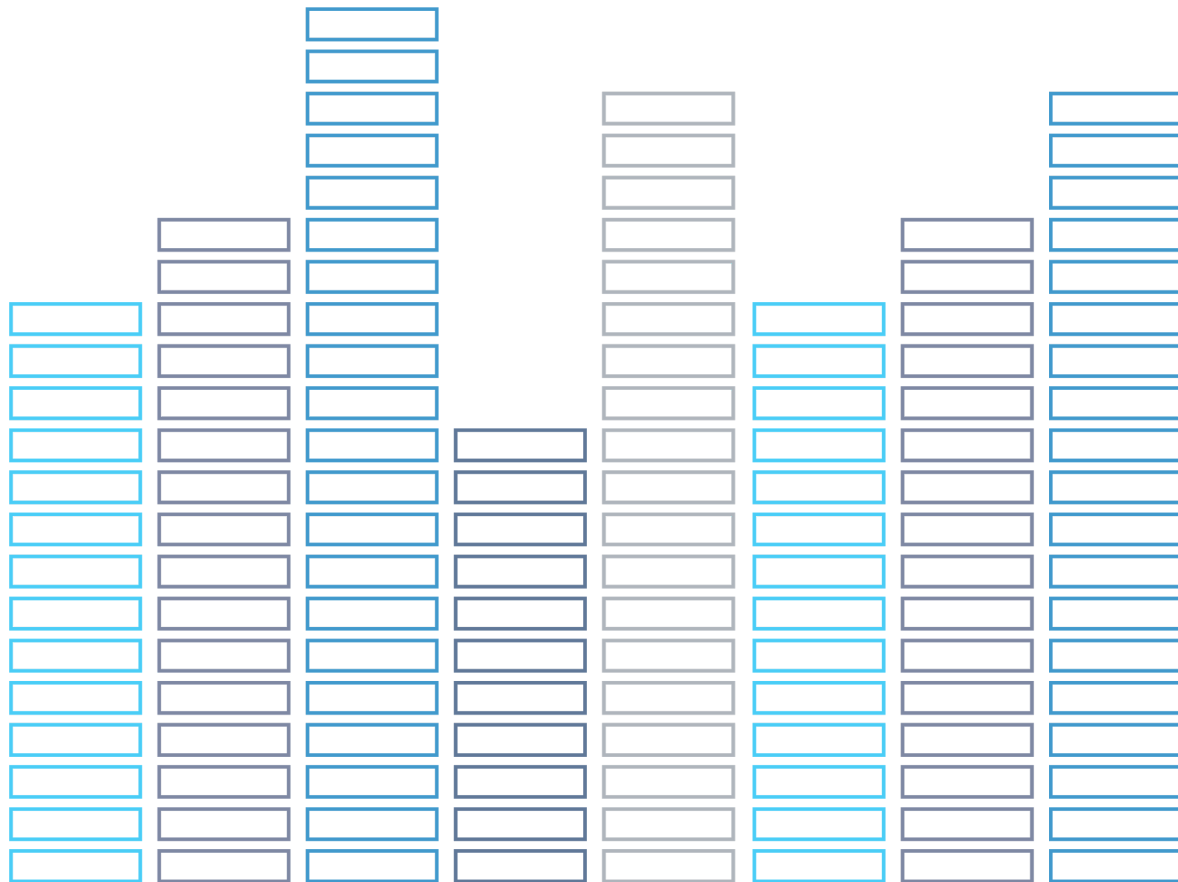


Publishing with purpose

2018 Strategy

January 2018



Publishing with Purpose

Open Data Charter 2018 - 2019 Strategy

January 2018

The open data challenge

A data-driven world is increasingly shaping the way our societies function—from nudging individual choices to the outcomes of elections—and our capacity to address complex societal challenges. When shared in the right way, the [vast amount of information produced today](#) can empower citizens to better understand how their government is [procuring services, running elections and solving policy problems](#).

The kind of future we wish to build will be determined by our capacity to access, use and share the information that is reshaping our social, political and economic environment. Yet according to the [Open Data Barometer](#), an international assessment on openness and quality of government data, more than 9 out of 10 datasets—including in key sectors like health and education—are still not open.

Over the past decade, the open data movement has been quite successful at promoting the idea of open data as a key element of good governance. However, international support for open data has not yet resulted in large-scale institutional changes in how most governments use and share data. Even when data is available, its use in responses to pressing policy challenges—e.g. sustainability, food security, growth—has progressed slowly. In addition, rising public mistrust in how personal data is being used and manipulated in the age of big data and [artificial intelligence](#) are serious threats to the momentum of this policy area.

Our mission

Open data holds the promise of helping solve tough policy problems, improving governance and government responsiveness, and promoting more inclusive and equitable societies.

The Charter's core principle, that governments should be “open by default”, is an ambitious—and potentially revolutionary—approach to government. Over the next year, the Charter network will work with governments and experts to better understand how to move towards this shared aspiration.

There has been a growing recognition that opening up data in isolation is less effective than it can be if targeted at solving specific policy problems—that “publish with purpose” can deliver more than “publish and they will come”.

Our goal is to embed open data as a central ingredient to achieving better solutions to the most pressing policy challenges of our time.

We seek to ensure that responses to the problems governments face are data driven and participatory, and that this influences how governments are building their data systems. We do this by setting global norms and demonstrating what they can achieve.

We believe that the best way to inspire governments to become “open by default” is to encourage small steps that yield quick wins. Rather than advocating for governments to open up as much data as possible, as fast as possible, we develop practical guidance for government reformers to open up datasets in ways that are most likely to yield specific and tangible benefits to citizens.

We do this by working in three types of partnerships:

- 1) with thematic experts and data holders in priority policy areas to develop guides that focus on how specific problems can be addressed through open data
- 2) with sector organisations and Charter signatories to test, refine and demonstrate impact of the guides through on-the-ground application
- 3) with actors in key sectors to demand publication and use of open data in accordance with our guides

The Open Data Charter is well positioned to help cement a new global consensus on how to use open data strategically in finding solutions to policy challenges, with more than 90 governments and organisations committed to opening up data based on a set of global Principles that have shaped much of the work being done in this field.

By steering open data efforts towards delivering impact and towards policy outcomes, we will build stronger institutional support and a broader constituency for the use of open data. At the same time, we will ensure that the vision of “open by default” is at the heart of what we do.

Background: evolution of the Open Data Charter

The Charter was founded in 2015 around [six global Principles](#) for how governments should be publishing information. Since then, more than 90 [governments](#) and [organisations](#) have joined the movement. The Charter was run as a voluntary multi-stakeholder initiative until January 2017, when a full time team was established to oversee the evolution of the Charter.

The work in this first year of the full time team was set up as an exploration of different potential roles for the Charter, to help us to understand where we can most add value, these included:

- 1) as a global influencer of international processes;
- 2) as a supporter of implementation leaders in adopting government;

- 3) as a shaper of work to address specific challenges using open data;

The Charter team had a successful first year, with some of the key achievements including:

- **Piloting the development of Open Up guides on the ground in Mexico.** We [worked with government and civil society to explore what datasets can be published to help in the fight against corruption](#). The insights from this project demonstrated the potential of the guides to translate the open data Principles into on the ground action.
- **Growing and strengthening the [Charter network](#).** Eleven new governments have adopted the Charter, including Australia and a host of cities, and a further eleven are in active discussions with the team about adoption. Others, such as Germany, have incorporated the Charter principles into their open data work without formally adopting it. Internally, the network transitioned to a new governance structure and Richard Stirling became the chair of the advisory board.
- **Working to better align open data measurement tools.** We've helped reinvigorate the Charter's measurement working group, which brings together the organisations behind the four key open data measurement tools. The [group is working on reducing duplication and more closely aligning their tools to the Charter principles](#).
- **Including the Charter in international mechanisms.** We've worked with the OECD to support the inclusion of an open data chapter, based on the Charter's principles, in the development of a new legal instrument on data. With the Argentinian government, we supported the inclusion of open data as a cross cutting priority in the G20 agenda.
- **Kick-starting conversations about the future of open data.** We launched a [report and held a webinar](#) on how open data officials responded when facing potential political backlash or transitions. We published a number of tools to help governments implement the Charter, such as our new [Implementation Roadmap](#). We worked with TAI to [publish a report on bridging the accountability impact gap](#), which led to conversations with open data leaders at the OGP Americas event in Buenos Aires.

As a small team that seeks to remain lean and agile, we committed to identifying the most impactful path, which would be the sole focus of a refined 2018 strategy. The successes and insights gathered from these potential paths led us to refine the Charter's unique value add.

Identifying our unique value-add

Our research in 2017 - on local government adopters and with leaders implementing the Charter - told us that **the Charter's Principles were a useful framework for engagement across jurisdictions and strong reference for shaping open data policies**. They are seen as

the “industry standard”—as a way of ensuring that the policies and plans are in line with recognised international good practice.

2017 saw a steady stream of governments and cities adopting the Charter. Many other organisations and governments are also now using the language of the Principles in their plans and policies, even if they are not formally adopting the Charter. This happened despite the team not actively soliciting new adopters, which appears to validate our approach that focusing on showcasing the value of the Principles acts as sufficient motivator for their uptake and use.

Yet the area where the Charter has **gained most traction is the Open Up Guides**. The guides bring together the Principles with a focus on using data to solving thematic problems.

Our learning from the work done in 2017 is that (1) the Principles do influence governments' behaviour and that (2) demonstrating specific ways in which these principles can be implemented to solve real problems is important for promoting and institutionalizing action by governments.

The Open Data Charter in 2018

In 2018 **the Charter will focus on ensuring that responses to key policy problems are informed by open data.**

This will be delivered through two strands of work:

1. **Shifting norms:** Refresh the Principles to recognise that opening up data in isolation is less effective than if targeted at solving specific policy problems, and that they continue to represent the gold standard for what good open data looks like.
2. **Practical guidance:** Demonstrate this approach through the development and piloting of Open Up Guides, such as work on “climate action” in Argentina.

The Open Data Charter Principles have shaped much of the work being done in this field. They now need to evolve to reflect and strengthen the vision of open data as part of systemic reforms to address concrete policy challenges.

We will launch a process to refresh the Principles - which will be done collaboratively in line with how the Principles were initially developed. We will continue to partner with the OECD to support coherence across international norms, and will connect that work into the

consultative process of updating the Principles. This process will focus on ensuring that the Principles continue to set the bar high and that they shape the work happening in the field.

The Charter will, in parallel, focus on applying the Principles to key policy challenges through demonstration projects. We will do this by working with thematic experts and data holders in particular sectors to develop guides, pilot their implementation, and influence actors in these sectors so they promote the use of open data to address particular policy challenges. The Charter provides a unique bridge between those working on open data, sector-focused organisations and advocates that are affected by the data being published. The team can help bust thematic silos and bring in technical expertise to expand the use of open data.

Activities

Shifting norms

- Publish a narrative around the evolution of the open data field, including by drawing on the OD4D State of Open Data research.
- Lead a process to refresh the Principles so they reflect the evolution of the sector.
- Embed the updated Principles in international tools to ensure consistency across global norms.

Practical guidance

- Deliver a demonstration project around one thematic Guide with a cohort of Charter adopters and partner organisations,
- Follow through, build upon and share learnings from the Anticorruption Open Up Guide road-testing in Mexico.
- Communicate findings from the two pilots and ensure the lessons feed into the updating of the Principles, global advocacy instruments and measurement tools.

Budget

EXPENDITURE	2017 / 2018	2018 / 2019	2 year total
Salary expenditure	237,527	211,813	449,340
Consultants and other professional services	98,614	67,430	166,044
Travel, workshops and meetings	10,454	12,600	23,054
Infrastructure and office	17,039	8,280	25,319
Fees and overhead	36,651	30,281	66,932
Total	400,286	330,405	730,690
<i>amount in USD</i>			

We would like to thank the Omidyar Network, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Inter-American Development Bank and the International Development Research Centre for the generous funding that they provide to the Charter.